



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Los Angeles County Honors a Korean American Living Legend by declaring Susan Ahn Cuddy Day

Acting on a [motion](#) by Supervisor [Mark Ridley-Thomas](#), the Board of Supervisors unanimously declared Tuesday, March 10, 2015, as Susan Ahn Cuddy Day throughout Los Angeles County, in honor of a 100-year-old Korean American pioneer and patriot.

[Susan Ahn Cuddy](#) was the first Asian American woman to join the US Armed Forces. During World War II, she trained pilots in air combat tactics as the Navy's first female gunnery officer. She eventually rose to the rank of lieutenant in the Navy's elite code breaking team.

During the Cold War, Ms. Cuddy served with the National Security Agency, supervising more than 300 scholars and experts on the U.S.S.R.

"These were all firsts as an Asian American woman in a man's world," Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said during a ceremony at the Hall of Administration. "Anti-Asian sentiment was brazenly prevalent but that didn't deter Susan Ahn Cuddy – she just knew what her mission was."

Ms. Cuddy said, "When the war came up, I took the opportunity (to join the military). It didn't matter whether I was Asian or not – I was fighting for freedom."

Breaking through the barriers of race and gender were a struggle sometimes, according to Ms. Cuddy's children, Philip and Christine.

Philip Cuddy said his mother endured segregation despite being a patriot. "When my mom was in the Navy, she would wear her military uniform on the bus – but she had to sit in the back of the bus because of segregation in Atlanta," he said.

Christine Cuddy said even her mother's marriage to fellow code breaker Frank Cuddy, an Irish American, was an act of courage.

"Interracial marriages were not common in the 1940's – in fact, she couldn't get a marriage license in Virginia because it was against the law," Christine Cuddy said. The couple decided to wed at naval base chapel instead.

Born in Los Angeles in 1915, Ms. Cuddy was the daughter of the first married couple to immigrate from Korea to the United States. They taught her to embrace being American without forgetting her Korean heritage.

Ms. Cuddy's father, Dosan Ahn Chang Ho, is a national hero in South Korea for being a leader of the independence movement against imperial Japan. He is also believed to have co-written the lyrics to South Korea's national anthem.

While in Los Angeles, he created a hub for the fledgling Korean American community, including founding the Young Korean Academy. Upon his death, Ms. Cuddy carried on his legacy.

She devoted her own life to civic engagement, and helped manage the family-owned Phil Ahn's Moongate restaurant, which became a community landmark in Panorama City.

Ms. Cuddy's brother, Phil Ahn, also raised the profile of Los Angeles' Korean American community, becoming the first actor of Asian heritage to receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

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